

JEFFERSON JOURNAL

September/October 2020

NEXT ACT: OSF & Ashland Face Unprecedented Challenges



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FEATURED

6 Next Act: OSF & Ashland Face Unprecedented Challenges

By Juliet Grable

This is the first summer without the Oregon Shakespeare Festival since World War II. The Festival, with its three theaters and eight-month season, is not only a beloved cultural tradition, but the keystone of Ashland's tourist economy. As with so much else, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned typical upside down.

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COVER: The Bricks Courtyard is quiet at a time when theater patrons would normally be lining up for a matinee at the Angus Bowmer Theater.

CREDIT: LANEY D'AQUINO AT ILLUSTRATED SANDWICH

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For the press to remain free it must be allowed to operate without government interference.

Fighting For An Independent Press

In July, a Seattle judge ruled that five news outlets whose journalists covered a racial justice protest in downtown Seattle must turn over previously unreleased videos and photos shot at the demonstration to local law enforcement. The Seattle Police Department subpoenaed the raw footage and unpublished photos in an effort to identify multiple individuals who allegedly stole firearms from unmarked police vehicles and committed multiple arsons in the area.

This ruling is a serious blow to an independent press in our neighboring state to the north and a reminder that we should not take a free press for granted.

Most fundamentally, the decision erodes the press' ability to fulfill one of its most essential functions—to act as a check on government. If sources view journalists as extensions of government power, they may choose to withhold information regarding the misconduct of public officials and agencies that deserve public scrutiny. The very essence of investigative journalism is built on the trust sources place on the press to act independently, and to protect them from retaliation for sharing sensitive or critical information. In opposing the ruling, *Seattle Times* Executive Editor Michele Matassa Flores wrote: "The media exist in large part to hold governments, including law enforcement agencies, accountable to the public. We don't work in concert with government, and it's important to our credibility and effectiveness to retain our independence from those we cover."

The ruling also endangers the safety of all journalists. The court's decision threatens journalists' role as independent observers, opening the possibility that any images or video captured by reporters could be used in investigations by law enforcement. Knowing this, some may view journalists as a threat and treat them as such. As the National Press Photographers Association and Press Freedom Defense Fund wrote in a joint statement following the ruling, "It is dangerous enough for visual journalists to be covering the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests over the death of George Floyd. The last thing visual journalists want is to be seen as an arm of law enforcement, aiding attempts to gather evidence." According to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, more than 669 incidents of aggressions against journalists, including assaults, arrests, interrogations and equipment seizures, have been reported and verified during Black Lives Matter protests in cities across the U.S. since late May.



For the press to remain free it must be allowed to operate without government interference. The U.S. Constitution explicitly safeguards a free press because of the critical role it plays in our democracy—ensuring the public has the information it needs to be an informed electorate. As the revered CBS journalist and news anchor Walter Cronkite once said, "Freedom of the press is not just important to democracy, it is democracy."

Yet, outside a hodgepodge of uneven, state shield laws and a broad statement in the First Amendment that prohibits Congress from making any law that abridges the freedom of the press, no formal federal protection for journalists exists—despite many attempts by the Society of Professional Journalists and others to get such protections enacted.

As citizens and media consumers, we should ensure that the journalists who work on our behalf each day to shine a light on government and hold those in power accountable are given the real independence they need to serve our collective national interest.



Paul Westhelle is
JPR's Executive Director.



PHOTO BY JULIET GRABLE

Even with expanded outdoor dining, without the usual influx of summer tourists, many Ashland restaurants are operating well below capacity.

NEXT ACT: OSF & Ashland Face Unprecedented Challenges

By Juliet Grable

This is the first summer without the Oregon Shakespeare Festival since World War II.

It's Friday night in downtown Ashland. There's a slight scrim of haze from wildfires to the east and west, but compared to the last few years, the skies are blessedly clear.

The Plaza is bedecked with tables and chairs, giving it an airy, European feel. Couples and small groups cluster on the sidewalks. But the atmosphere is hardly typical of a weekend in late July. Gone are the throngs of theatergoers, rushing to make their dinner reservations before the plays start at 8:30. The lawn that normally hosts the Green Show is nearly empty. Most people are wearing masks.

This is the first summer without the Oregon Shakespeare Festival since World War II. The Festival, with its three theaters and eight-month season, is not only a beloved cultural tradition, but the keystone of Ashland's tourist economy. As with so much else, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned typical upside down.

OSF opened its 2020 season on February 28 with a preview of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That same day, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the second domestic non-travel related case of COVID-19 in Washington State. On March 8, Governor Kate Brown declared a state of emergency for Oregon.

"Cast and crew were told to gather backstage after what turned out to be our last performance of *Bring Down the House*," recalls Betsy Schwartz, an actor who had started her first season with OSF in January. "Our stage manager told us to stay home for the rest of the week." Thus began what Schwartz describes as "death by a thousand paper cuts."

On March 27, OSF announced it was shrinking its season to two months starting in least September. Five productions were cut altogether.

On May 8, artistic director Nataki Garrett announced that the 2020 season was canceled. The reverberations were felt, painfully, across the community.

"When you lay off nearly 500 people in a town as small as this, you're affecting the lives and the livelihoods of 5,000 people in the town and at least 20,000 people in the region," says Garrett.

This year was already going to be pivotal for OSF, even without a global pandemic. The hiring of Garrett in 2019 signaled a continued commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, a course solidified during Bill Rauch's tenure. A new executive director, David Schmitz, was coming on board. OSF was coming out of a financial crisis brought on in part by two smoky summers.

The stage had been set for a new act.

OSF Online

In a video posted on OSF's Facebook page on July 16, actor William Thomas Hodgson sits on his back patio—physically distanced—with his neighbor, Elizabeth Fairchild, an active OSF member. They talk about *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Hodgson played Demetrius, but also about the pros and cons of online theater.

"For people who want their imaginations stimulated, live theater is it," says Fairchild. "There's an energy there."

True, Hodgson agrees, but notes that some of his friends balk at the financial and time commitment of live theater.



PHOTO BY JULIE GRABLE

Restaurants, retailers, and innkeepers are having to adapt to safety requirements amid sharply decreased patronage.

"This adventure—putting theater online—could give us more access," says Hodgson, who is 32.

The video—and Hodgson's "takeover" of OSF's page—is part of O!, the Festival's "immersive" digital platform. It includes hyperactive social media pages, an archive of video interviews, and social justice resources. (For now, there are pages for Black Liberation and LGBTQIA+ resources, with more to come.) For a time, people all over the world could stream videos of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Copper Children*, two productions from the truncated 2020 season.

According to Garrett, the platform was first conceived with physical accessibility in mind, recognizing that some older patrons might appreciate the choice of opting out of a live play and watching it on a screen in the comfort of their lodging.

Now, the platform has taken on new relevance and urgency—a way to keep OSF on people's radar, but also to attract new fans.

O!'s Facebook page has a clippy, casual vibe. During Out Week, a flurry of video posts celebrated Pride. For several days in July, Michael Maag, OSF's Resident Lighting Designer and Pyrotechnician, who uses a wheelchair, took over the feed, posting photos in celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act.



After 22 years in Ashland, Village Shoes announced it was closing its doors for good this summer.

PHOTO BY JULIET GRABLE

Typically, OSF patrons are older, wealthy, highly educated people from the Bay Area or Seattle. According to the Ashland Chamber, 64% of ticket buyers enjoyed annual household incomes greater than \$100,000.

If OSF is to survive, that will have to change.

"We're hearing that something like 50% of what they like to call the "status quo" theater audience is not coming back," says Garrett. Older patrons who are at higher risk for COVID-19 may not feel safe about being in a theater with hundreds of other audience members, if and when live theatre returns to Ashland.

In Garrett's view, OSF's future rests on cultivating a new audience.

"If I think about the greatest divide in the American theater, it's age diversity," says Garrett. "If I can break the age diversity divide, I can break every other diversity divide, because the generations outside the status quo generation are diverse in every way you can imagine."

She believes part of the problem is how organizations like OSF connect with potential patrons. Unlike OSF's established audience, younger people generally don't care about membership and subscriptions. "They just want to come and see the work," Garrett says.

The key is helping this newer, younger, more diverse audience feel they have a place, and convincing older, seasoned OSF patrons they have a role to play in helping newcomers feel welcome.

Then there are the plays. This year's lineup, chosen by Garrett's predecessor, Bill Rauch, illustrates a commitment to diverse

and underrepresented voices, with productions like black odyssey and *The Confederates*, which Garrett was slated to direct, and *Bring Down the House*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's Henry VI plays featuring an all-female (and female-presenting) cast.

The fate of the 2020 productions remains to be seen, but the O! platform is here to stay.

"It's a way for people to connect to us, to see some of the work on our stages, to fall back in love with our beloved acting company, and maybe, to have a moment of grace," Garrett says.

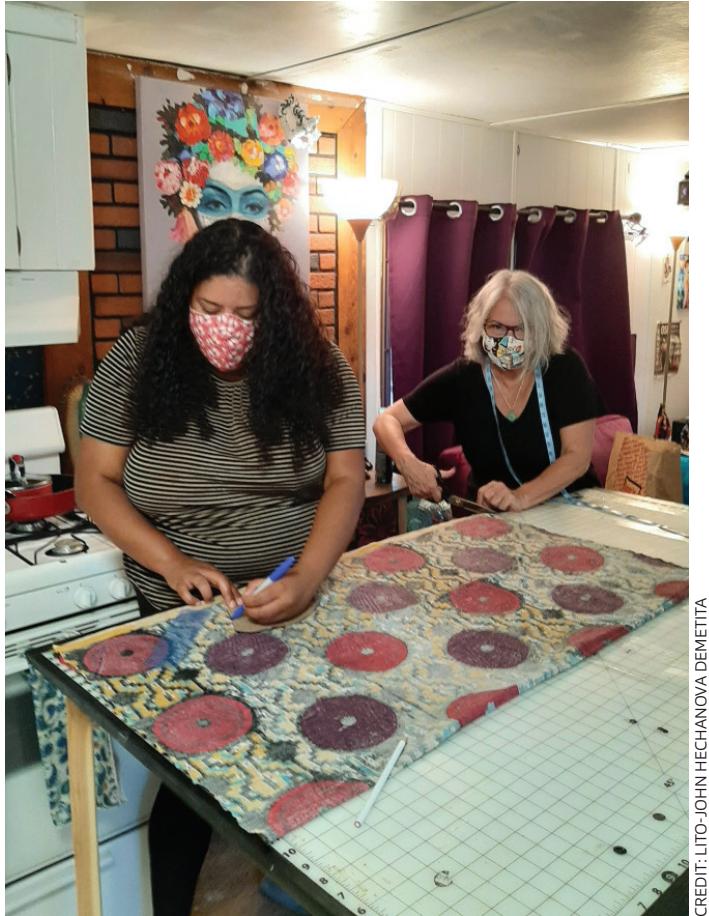
For better or worse, online is how we gather—for now, and for the indefinite future.

Pivoting

Patina Soul, a women's boutique tucked into a small building on East Main, is stocked with casual styles selected to appeal to Ashland moms and college students. Owner Catherine Wallner opened Patina in 2009, just as Oregon was starting to emerge from the depths of the Recession. She made some smart business decisions early on, targeting locals and choosing a less expensive space off of Main Street.

Even so, Wallner says two smoke-filled summers and a leaky roof which forced her to close for a few weeks last year left little in reserve when the pandemic hit.

"The two months starting in mid-March were the most stressful period of my life," says Wallner. She navigated the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster loan process, not knowing when or if she was going to be able



First Hand Muriel Mangual (left) and Master Stitcher Jeanne Legrand are colleagues in OSF's costume shop.

If there's consensus about anything, it's the need to diversify beyond a business model that relies on hordes of tourists descending on Ashland during the summer months.

OSF and Ashland's economy have been inexorably linked for decades. According to the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Ashland sees 350,000 visitors every year. A good third of them are here for the OSF. The Festival, in turn, supports a spectrum of local businesses—restaurants, bed and breakfast inns, motels, boutiques, but also wineries and rafting outfitters.

And yet, outdoor and culinary attractions draw as many tourists as the Festival. Southern Oregon University (SOU), the City of Ashland, and Asante Ashland Community Hospital employ many, and light manufacturing, film, and technology are growing sectors.

Steve Rice, who closed the Outdoor Store after two bad snow years and two smoky summers, says landlords are about to face a rude awakening. Four large retail spaces are currently vacant downtown, and more attrition seems inevitable.

Rice, who is part of Sloan's Thursday group, speculates that landlords will have to lower rents permanently. If that happens, professionals might be lured back, which could add a welcome dose of normalcy to a downtown that has for some become too precious.

If the pandemic has done anything, it's to demonstrate that more work can take place virtually than was conceivable. According to Sloan, businesses that have fared well, like Websters, Fun Again Games, and the Ashland Fly Shop, are those with a storefront but that also do plenty of sales "out the back door" through online platforms.

While launching short-term efforts to create economic vitality—the hope behind the cordoned-off plaza and outdoor dining—the Chamber has also applied for a grant with City of Ashland and SOU to develop a long-term economic development strategy based on the changing demographics of people visiting and moving to Ashland.

"Without the Festival, we're seeing a different customer; a younger, more active individual," says Slattery. These visitors are more focused on the outdoors and culinary experiences, but they're also attracted to small-town living. The Chamber is seeing a significant uptick in people wanting to relocate from large metro areas, and not just from long-time OSF attendees looking to retire. "Now we're seeing people who can telecommunicate from somewhere like the Bay area looking around and saying, I could live anywhere," says Slattery.

Just as people can move to Ashland for the quality of life and bring their jobs with them, local companies can consider hiring outside the talent pool of Ashland or the greater Rogue Valley. But while \$500,000 homes might be attractive to tech transplants, what about those who don't command Silicon Valley salaries?

In Sloan's view, a critical key to building resilience is circulating dollars more locally and creating living-wage jobs here.

"For the last 20 years, we've focused on globalization," he says. "Now there's a motion for re-localization." One of the projects Sloan is working on in partnership with SOU and others is Ashland Works Innovation Lab, an incubator centered around an internship program and curriculum that cultivates leaders. Students can work with existing businesses or help launch new ones; the goal is to create new living-wage jobs while meeting "unmet essential needs" in the local community.

to re-open or whether she would have to let her staff of five go.

The PPP, along with two months of abated rent from her landlord, has kept her business afloat. Most local business and restaurant owners are in the same boat and feeling the same collective nausea, which has fostered a "we're all in this together" mentality—for now.

Sandra Slattery, Executive Director for the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, has logged dozens of hours on Zoom calls with local, regional, and state-wide groups, sharing information, advocating for Ashland's business community, and hammering out plans for each new phase of reopening.

"We had to pivot 180 degrees in an instant," says Slattery. She describes keeping up with and disseminating the latest information "like trying to grab Jell-O."

Landlords lowered rents. Restaurants retooled. Locals ordered take-out—lots of it. But will the collaborative spirit fade once the benefits that have been propping up local businesses and household budgets throttle back, or disappear?

"We have seen the flash of lightning, but we're only just starting to hear the thunder," says Stephen Sloan, founder of the Humane Leadership Institute. Since March, he has been meeting with a group of people, including business owners, non-profit leaders, and representatives from Southern Oregon University (SOU) and the Chamber every Thursday to brainstorm ways to soften the blow from the coming economic and social crisis.



PHOTO BY JULIET GRABLE



PHOTO BY JULIET GRABLE

Steve Rice closed the Outdoor Store in 2019 after two years of dampened sales due to wildfire smoke and poor snow.

LEFT: The City of Ashland and Chamber of Commerce are hoping to lure visitors to Ashland with a series of themed weekends.

As welcome as all of these efforts are, there's no denying the current reality. In 2019, OSF had a statewide impact of \$40 million. Ashland retailers, restaurateurs, and innkeepers are collectively holding their breath, waiting to see how the pandemic trends, knowing Ashland's short-term economic fate hinges on OSF's.

Toward a more sustainable OSF

For Muriel Mangual, who works as First Hand in OSF's costume shop, housing has been an issue since she first received her offer letter three years ago.

"I was warned to start looking right away," she says, recalling the stress of apartment searching from thousands of miles away. She secured an apartment at a "college complex" near SOU; today, she lives in a trailer park.

Mangual, who is Afro-Latina, admits to culture shock upon moving to Ashland from the ethnically diverse East Coast. For her, the job represented stability after years of dues paying: working short-term summer stock contracts with no health insurance, moving frequently, and crashing with her mom between gigs.

Master Stitcher Jeanne Legrand, who has been with OSF for 28 years, is happy to have witnessed changes that are making her chosen career more sustainable, especially for her younger coworkers. Costuming and sewing was and is still seen as women's work, Legrand explains.

"When I first arrived there, I was so happy to have a job," she recalls. "But a lot of us also felt like, why aren't we making as much as the scenic carpenters?"

Talk of unionizing the costume department has come up three separate times since the 1990s. Each time, wages improved. Legrand says she and her colleagues also enjoy competitive health and retirement benefits.

Still, "I've always wanted a union here," says Legrand. "I think it lends a lot of organization and fairness to the department." Because the costume department was split on whether or not to unionize, they did not participate in the most recent vote, in June of 2015, which created International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 154. This union represents about 75 OSF employees in five stagecraft departments: wigs, wardrobe, lighting, sound, and stage operations. These technicians are also known as the "run crew."

Local 154 President Amanda Sager, who is also an audio engineer for OSF's Sound department, says the union contract helps protect employees who work physically demanding jobs and ensures their benefits don't evaporate during budget crises.

"Rotating rep is great for visitors wanting to see several plays over a long weekend, but the schedule is intensely challenging for the actors, directors, and people behind the scenes," Sager says.

Sager became involved in the unionizing process six years ago. As people in different departments started talking with each other, they learned of disparities in how people in one department were treated compared to another. This new awareness led to a sense of solidarity.

After a lengthy but transparent process, Local 154's contract with OSF was finalized in June of 2016.

"I'm 33 and my partner in crime, Courtney Cunningham, who is our business agent, is probably 35," says Sager. "We're young women who did this thing together along with a rowdy bunch of stage hands."

The union has made things more equitable for employees—especially women in the early stages of their careers.

Like Legrand, Sager says that there is too often a tacit expectation that you should be grateful just to have a job, especially in male-dominated arenas such as lighting and sound. The

If there's consensus about anything, it's the need to diversify beyond a business model that relies on hordes of tourists descending on Ashland during the summer months.



More live-work spaces and professional offices may become part of Ashland's downtown landscape.

union can advocate for them and make sure they receive the pay and benefits commensurate with their experience.

Local 154 was in the process of bargaining their first successor agreement with OSF when COVID hit. They have taken a hiatus from bargaining; however, they were able to negotiate a letter of agreement that guaranteed benefits as they were laid off, including two additional months of health insurance and access to OSF's employee assistance program. The letter also includes guarantees on benefits and working conditions when they return to work. Union members will have their sick time bank and vacation accrual rates reinstated upon being rehired; they will also have the first right to their jobs before someone outside the union can be recruited. Relocation expenses for some will be covered.

Meanwhile, many company members are living in limbo. Most qualified for the extra \$600 a week in federal aid through the CARES Act; however, that benefit ended July 31.

Contracted actors, who are usually provided housing for the season, saw their housing benefits extended through June 1 after the season was cancelled. Some, like Schwartz, have entered short-term rental contracts with OSF.

She and her husband Peter rented out their Seattle home



PHOTO BY JULIET GRABLE

Catherine Wallner, owner of Patina Soul, has seen an up-tick in business since May 15. She says kind words from her clients have kept her going.

when they moved to Ashland in January.

"We don't have a house to go back to," Schwartz explains. "Besides, Ashland is quite lovely." Though still getting used to the nonchalant wildlife, they are relishing the small-town vibe—and the relatively low COVID numbers. She is pursuing voice work while Peter works carpentry jobs.

Mangual is also hunkered down, with no plans to leave Ashland. No one in her industry is hiring, and her mother has told her not to come home.

"That may sound harsh, but the numbers in New Jersey are not good and I would be going back to an area that's more densely populated," she explains.

Like everyone else, she's trying to stay safe, and waiting.

Leading the way

Let's pan back. Here we are, during an election year, at the intersection of a global pandemic, the #MeToo movement, and Black Lives Matter, with an Oregon Shakespeare Festival under new leadership determined to steer the ship on a sustainable course in an Ashland that had already begun to think about diversifying beyond its anchor attraction.

The question on everyone's mind, of course, is the fate of the 2021 season.

According to CJ Martinez, OSF's Communications Director, a live season is contingent upon the availability of a successfully produced and distributed vaccine and manageable and available treatment for COVID-19. Any decision to reopen will be informed by the federal government and health authorities and Governor Brown's mandates for Oregon.

Garrett feels the weight of this responsibility, not only to help save OSF, but to do so on behalf of the greater ecosystem in which OSF resides.



The Oregon Shakespeare Festival presents the Virtual Dare to Dream Gala on Saturday, September 12, at 5p.m. This is a free event filled with entertainment, community, and special appearances by beloved current and former OSF actors and artists. This live online Gala comes at a critical time of need for OSF. It's a chance to celebrate and support the Festival with fellow audience members. The evening features stories, surprises, memories, and glimpses into daring dreams of the future as well as opportunities to win experiences, gifts, and memorabilia.

Visit osfashland.org/2020gala to RSVP and learn about OSF's Virtual Dare to Dream Gala.



Many of the vendors from the Lithia Artisans Market have moved to Lithia Park so that restaurants can expand their outdoor seating on Calle Guanajuato.

PHOTO BY JULIET GRABLE

Otherwise, she says, “Where are people going to sleep and where are they going to eat and where are they going to enjoy themselves when they’re not in a theater?”

Garrett will not have to do this work alone. As I write this, David Schmitz and his family are likely en route to Ashland from Chicago. Schmitz is leaving his post as Executive Director of Steppenwolf Theater in Chicago to take the reins as Executive Director at OSF. While Garrett is responsible for the artistic programming at OSF, Schmitz’ purview is finance and operations, including fundraising and marketing.

OSF has had its share of financial woes in recent years. The Festival lost nearly \$6 million and in 2017 and 2018 laid off staff both years, in large part because of dampened tourism from wildfire smoke. In 2018, the smoke forced OSF to cancel and/or move 26 performances from the Elizabethan Theater. The next year, they were ready with contingency plans for smoky days and a trimmed operating budget.

Now, revenues have plummeted to essentially nothing. Shortly after the shutdown in March, OSF launched the Dare to Dream campaign to help the organization survive and plan for 2021 and beyond. (People can donate directly or host campaigns on behalf of OSF. As of this writing, the campaign has raised close to half of the \$5 million goal.) On July 14, the Oregon legislators agreed to funnel \$50 million in federal coronavirus relief to arts and cultural organizations across the state. OSF received \$4.7 million.

Schmitz will have his work cut out for him. His first task? A lot of listening.

“I’m really interested in understanding how OSF supports the community and how the community supports OSF, and how we can turn all of that up to benefit both sides,” he says.

Even before the pandemic, Garrett had tagged Schmitz as the person who could help the organization transform. Now, that charge has only become more urgent.

“I’m looking at, how do I create a container for OSF that allows it to be viable and necessary 85 years from now?” says Garrett. She believes that together, she and Schmitz can begin to shape this concept into something solid.

I remember the profound sadness I felt upon hearing the news, back in March, that OSF’s 2020 season was going to be postponed. I’ve lived in the area for over 20 years and have always considered OSF to be the heart of Ashland. But as so often happens, I had begun taking that heart for granted.

Writing this story gave me the chance to contemplate what richness the Oregon Shakespeare Festival brings to Ashland—not only the Green Shows, live performances, and tourist income, but the social richness it cultivates through the actors, directors, technicians, and artisans who create the work; the volunteers and visitors who support it, the students it educates, and the many businesses and industries it helps sustain.

I was struck by the sense of optimism I felt from Garrett, Schmitz, and nearly everyone else I spoke with. And yet, I don’t want to downplay the fear, the anxiety, and inevitable fallout from the pandemic and lost live season—and hopefully it’s just one.

Like any ecosystem, OSF and Ashland will thrive because of the diversity and interrelationships that make it resilient; but like any ecosystem, it must evolve, responding to the shocks and challenges that come its way.

I would not presume to speculate how this drama will unfold. All I can say is I’m invested in the characters, and I’m looking forward to the next act.

Juliet Grable is a freelance writer who has lived in the Ashland area for 20 years. She currently lives in the Greensprings with her husband Brint and menagerie of animals.

Stomping Grapes

We're all doing a lot of remembering, these days, of how it used to be, before coronavirus, before masks and social distancing. Everything has a patina of nostalgia. It was only last September that I was stomping grapes for a winemaker in Seattle, but already it seems like another lifetime. Actually, stomping grapes itself felt like another lifetime. As soon as I stepped into the bin of grapes, I felt like one of the peasants depicted in Medieval illuminated manuscripts: stomping the grapes in large barrels, dancing a jig to the lively tune of fiddles while brawny lads hauled more bins of grapes from the vineyard and everyone—men, women, youths, and children—enjoyed a festive harvest on a sunny autumn day.

It wasn't *quite* like that, especially because in those days the men did the stomping because women, of course, wouldn't be lifting their skirts and showing their legs. Also, although it was a sunny autumn day in Seattle, we were indoors, in a very clean warehouse where T2 Cellar makes its wine. There wasn't a speck of dirt anywhere, and my son, Ela, and I cleaned and sanitized our feet in four sequenced buckets before stepping onto the grapes.

(I wondered what kind of sanitization the peasants did to their feet.) Everything else was pretty much as it was centuries ago. We were stomping on the grapes because the grapes needed to be pulverized, and, as in days of yore, there was no better way to do it than with the feet.

This being the era of machines, however, and hand (or in this case foot) labor being more costly for the winemaker than machines (unless the winemaker has willing friends to come and help for the fun of it), winemakers now use a machine, called a destemmer, which does the work of foot-stomping for the Granache and Sangiovese grapes T2 Cellar uses for red wine. The destemmer will juice the grapes and send them through tubes into storage jars in one smooth process. The foot-stomping was for the Marsanne grapes, a white-wine variety, which weren't nu-

merous enough for T2 Cellar's large press and unsuitable for the small basket press, which doesn't press white clusters very well. "Therefore," Todd Threlkeld, head winemaker, told me, "stomping is not a lark but the most efficient and effective way to process a small amount of grapes"—fortunately for me, because it was also a lark.

Just as in Medieval days, there was music, if not fiddlers on the ground, then contemporary rock music on the stereo, that had us jumping and dancing like the peasants, at least for a while. Pretty soon I began thinking this was a lot of work, after all, until an experienced winemaker told me it wasn't necessary to jump. We just had to squeeze the grapes until no more balls of grapes rolled under our feet. After that I stepped firmly but quietly onto the grapes, pressing hard, taking small steps, chasing with the next step the grapes that escaped towards the edges of the bin.

When all the grapes had been brought to submission, when there were no more rolling balls of grapes underfoot, we poured the resulting pulp into a press, another ancient piece of equipment, and turned the crank to press pulp into juice, which we then poured into large jars. Now I was catapulted not into the Middle Ages but to my father's basement, where I used to help him bottle his wine when I came to visit from Oregon. He would have enjoyed this day with me.

After pulping, pressing, and pouring, the six of us working on winemaking that day had delicious dolmas and falafels from a near-by Greek deli, washed down with some tastes of T2 Cellar wine. Good wine. When the pandemic has come to an end and I can go to Seattle again, I want to go to T2 Cellar and have some white wine from Marsanne grapes. I'll lift my glass to the light and squint, seeing in the wine my bare feet stomping the grapes in the bin like a peasant at harvest in a vineyard.



Diana Coogle has lived in the mountains above the Applegate River for 45 years.

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JES BURNS

Tracing The Coronavirus Through Sewer Pipes In Oregon

Jason Cook is wearing a blue dotted mask and a large button on his neon safety vest that reads "Let's Keep Our Distance." It's a good reminder in the age of COVID-19, but maybe one that's not really necessary for a man wielding a crowbar and collecting water from sewers.

Cook, a university intern with Clean Water Services, uses the crowbar to pull aside a manhole cover, releasing a wave of stink from the open sewer line below.

"We have this stainless-steel little bucket and then we're dropping it into the stream," he said.

The shiny metal cup is lowered on a rope. A hollow clanking sound rings out as the cup bounces off the sides and bottom of the concrete tube.

Apparently not many people in the area are washing their hands, taking showers or flushing their toilets. When Cook pulls up the cup, there's very little liquid.

"Because of how low flow this is, we'll have to get a couple grabs," he says, pouring the water into sample bottle.

The cup disappears again into the manhole. Cook will repeat this process dozens of times today while making three circuits of the 20 or so manholes being tested in and around Forest Grove.

The collection is part of a joint research project between Clean Water Services and Oregon State University. They're collecting sewer water from several communities in Washington County in hopes of being about to detect coronavirus and give public health officials a head start on curbing COVID-19 outbreaks before they happen.

Shedding the virus

Coronavirus gets into the wastewater stream through the plumbing in our houses, businesses and places that we work.



Researchers in Oregon are looking for coronavirus in wastewater in an effort to develop an early warning system for COVID-19 outbreaks.

TODD SONLIETH / OPB

Down To Earth

Continued from page 15

"When people get infected with coronavirus, your body acts by trying to kill it. And as it kills it, it also kills the cells that it's infected," said Ken Williamson, head of research at Hillsboro-based Clean Water Services.

Williamson, who is leading the wastewater surveillance project for the utility, estimates people shed 10 million to a billion viruses per gram of feces per day. But because the research is so new, questions remain about exactly how much coronavirus passes into the sewer system, when during an infection shedding occurs, and what percent of infected people actually shed detectable virus.

The samples collected in Washington County will be sent to Oregon State University, where a lab will look for genetic evidence of coronavirus in the water. The researchers are expecting to have early results that can be passed on to public health officials in July.

Stand-alone projects testing wastewater for the coronavirus are starting to catch on nationwide, with several states – including Washington and California – launching their own projects.

"We're still trying to understand what this data means and how it could be used for public health actions," said Vincent Hill, head of the Waterborne Disease Prevention Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But he says the data has the potential to be very useful.

"If we can get [a] signal... targeted to particular high-risk populations, like in a nursing home or university, and if you can get that signal a week or so before you might see clinical cases, that's obviously very valuable. That would be very valuable data to make public health decisions about," Hill said.

This is what Clean Water Services and OSU wants to accomplish.

Our sewers are like a complex underground canal system. Waste from your home flows downstream, combining into larger and larger pipes until it finally hits the water treatment plant. Williams says by moving upstream you can isolate small areas of a city.

"By sampling particular manholes, we can get just the water from that area... So we wanted to be able to sample from nursing homes, from hospitals and from potentially schools when the kids go back this fall," he said. "I firmly believe that we will have another outbreak of the virus this fall, so we will be firmly ready for that."

What's in the bottle?

The tricky thing with wastewater surveillance is knowing what it means when a sample comes back positive for the coronavirus. The technology has only been in use for a few decades, and there are limits to what it can reveal.

Wastewater surveillance has been used successfully to say if a disease is present in a community – specifically poliovirus.

But Tyler Radniecki, the Oregon State University environmental engineer collaborating with CWS, says the Washington County project hopes to take that capability a step further and detect if virus levels are increasing.

"Ideally, what will you do is we'd be able to identify hot spots or areas overseen spikes. And then we can get county health officials into that area and alert them to be like this seems to be a spot that you would want to investigate more thoroughly," he said.

Similar work in the Netherlands early in the pandemic found coronavirus in the wastewater system six days before the first actual case was reported.

But trend-level information is likely where wastewater surveillance tops out – at least in the near term.

Similar work in the Netherlands early in the pandemic found coronavirus in the wastewater system six days before the first actual case was reported.

"The thing that everybody wants and that's going to be the hardest is to actually convert the numbers that you're measuring at the wastewater treatment plant or in the sewage line to an actual prevalence number," said University of Michigan's Krista Wigginton, who's leading a project to detect coronavirus in wastewater in California.

"Can you get to a concentration measurement and then say, 'This is how many people in the building or this is how many people in the community have the illness?' We have quite a bit of work to do, I think, until that's a possibility."

The CWS/OSU wastewater surveillance work will continue at least through next spring, and likely won't make significant inroads in correlating their testing results to actual case numbers in Washington County.

But OSU's Radniecki is starting to chip away at that problem in other cities around the state. He's partnered with fellow Oregon researcher Ben Dalziel to expand the wastewater surveillance project to Bend and Newport.

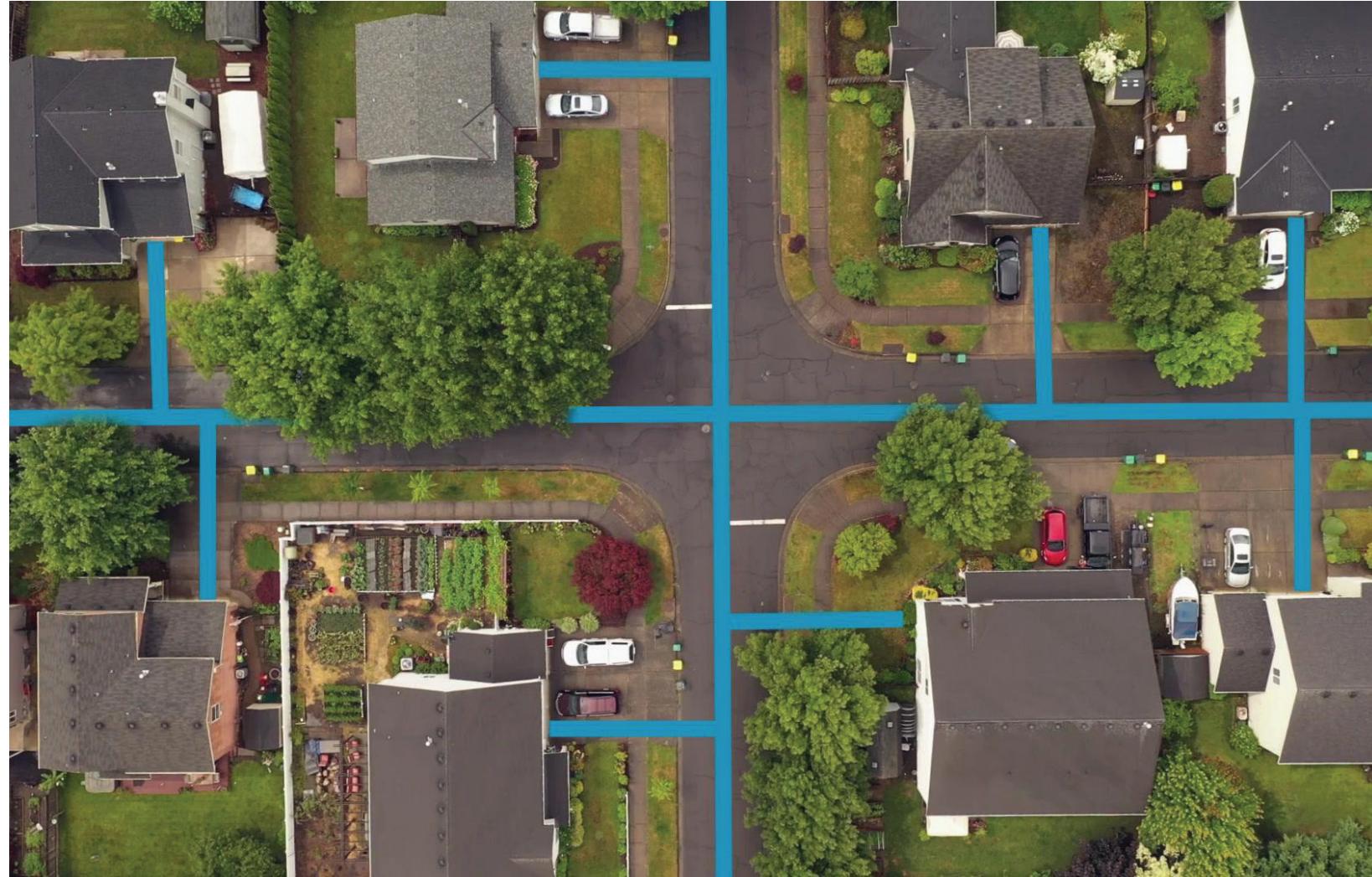
Dalziel heads up the TRACE (Team-based Rapid Assessment of Community-level Coronavirus Epidemics) project at Oregon State University. TRACE teams go door-to-door to test residents of specific neighborhoods for COVID-19.

The two studies are coordinating to target the same neighborhoods at the same time.

"One of the things we're interested in is doing the two types of data stream side by side to get a sense of if we could start to build a sort of a crosswalk between them – how do they relate?" Dalziel said.

He said getting an idea of the actual prevalence of COVID-19 in an area offers some "ground-truthing" for the wastewater testing.

"They're doing prevalence studies, true prevalence studies. And then we combine that with our sewer surveillance, that's



TODD SONFLIETH, KERIN SHARMA / OPB

This photo illustration shows how sewers form an interconnected network under the streets and areas of a city can be isolated by targeting certain manholes.

going to start to get us towards understanding if you can go from sewer data to incidents reports," Radniecki said.

But the benefit of combining the two studies aren't just scientific.

"We can do testing at the sewer level orders of magnitude cheaper than would be required to go out and do nasal swab prevalence testing," he said.

And this makes wastewater surveillance an attractive option as an early warning system that could work in conjunction with TRACE.

"One of the things that we're excited about maybe doing in the future is doing wastewater more broadly. And then if the wastewater detects something – like a potential hot spot – partnering with the community there to do door-to-door testing as a sort of a rapid follow up," Dalziel said.

Worldwide, there's a growing interest in the potential of wastewater surveillance to help save lives during the pandemic. Europe is leading the way with countries like the Netherlands that began to test wastewater before the coronavirus even appeared in the country.

Coordination of testing efforts at the national level isn't happening in the United States, but the federal government is funding many of the state-level efforts, including Oregon's.

"People are starting to recognize that this could be a very powerful tool," Radniecki said.

And efforts are underway to bring wastewater disease surveillance to even more communities in Oregon.

This article was first published on June 24, 2020 at www.opb.org. For more information on TRACE-COVID-19 visit <https://trace.oregonstate.edu/>

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Jes Burns is a reporter for OPB's Science & Environment unit. Jes has a degree in English literature from Duke University and a master's degree from the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communications.

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Our Faustian Bargain With Technology

The future possibilities for our species significantly changed on Monday, July 16th 1945 at precisely 5:30 a.m. At that moment, the landscape of New Mexico's Jornada del Muerto desert was engulfed by a flash of beautiful light brighter than a dozen suns.

That beautiful light was caused by a very ugly explosion 10,000 times hotter than the surface of the sun. So hot in fact that every living creature within a one-mile radius of ground-zero was annihilated and the desert sand was instantly transformed into jade-colored glass.

Rising above the destruction was a towering and ominous 40,000-foot mushroom cloud. America had successfully detonated the first atomic bomb and created a weapon of mass destruction. Whatever future could have been imagined for the human race up until that moment now included destroying the world.

With the birth of the Atomic Age, we generated three possible scenarios for the future of our species, beginning with the most obvious: extinction. In this scenario, we destroy ourselves and go extinct just like the billions of species that have gone extinct before us. I hope I'm wrong, but presently this extinction scenario appears to be the most likely.

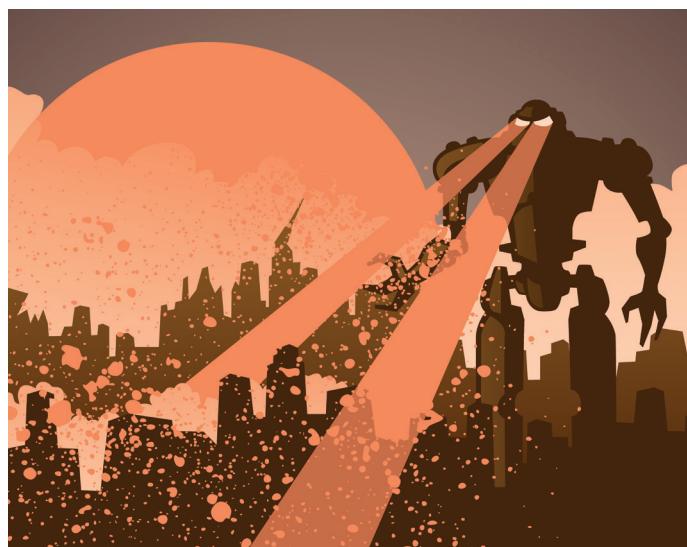
Scenario 2: We build a utopia. We stop fighting and start working together. We solve problems rather than create them. We use our technology for good, not evil. We start saving the planet rather than destroying it and our species survives and thrives into the deep future.

And by "deep future" I mean millions of years.

In this scenario, our species could exist for so long that our descendants are still here when our sun finally runs out of the hydrogen it's burning in its reactive core and swells to a red giant. When that happens all of the oceans will boil causing a runaway greenhouse effect. Earth's surface temperature will rise to 750 degrees Fahrenheit and then quickly double as the planet becomes engulfed in a global forest fire that will burn until all of the oxygen in the atmosphere is gone.

All life on Earth will perish in the crucible of the expanding sun. We know this is the fate of our sun because we've observed other stars in our own galaxy dying this way.

It seems as though technology has been a sort of Faustian Bargain for our species: it giveth and it taketh away.



This cycle of life and death of stars has been going on for a very long time. And thankfully so. The essential elements for all organic life—carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen—these have all been forged in the death of stars. You and I are, as cosmologist Carl Sagan famously put it: "made of star stuff".

Scenario 3: We leave Earth and head out to a cooler and more inhabitable corner of the galaxy. By "we", I don't mean humans like you and me. Our descendants will need to be radically different from us in order to survive deep space travel and rapid adaptation to the harsh environment of the cosmos.

The only way that we might accomplish this is through the continued advancement of technology in fields such as genetic engineering, nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and robotics; all of which could enable our descendants to live much longer than you and I. Perhaps forever.

How might we do this?

We'll do it by editing our DNA to become impervious to disease and to rapidly adapt to new environments. We'll manufacture replacement organs and perhaps entire bodies. We'll connect our limited brains directly to powerful AI systems to augment our intelligence. We'll merge and modify our fragile organic bodies with hardier robotic parts.

This sounds like sci-fi, but these things are already happening today to one degree or another and will continue to accelerate and improve exponentially.

Inside The Box

Continued from page 19

Surviving into the deep future sounds a bit far-fetched too, especially when you consider that *Homo sapiens* have only been around for 200,000 years.

Life first appeared on Earth 3.8 billion years ago. We've only been here for .00001 percent of that time. And yet, we have achieved so much in such a short time because of technology.

Technology is what makes us human; it's why we have survived and thrived as a species. Without technology, we would have perished long ago. And without further development of technology, our descendants will not have a chance to survive into the deep future.

We have the opportunity and capability to radically and rapidly change our destiny through the further creation and application of technology. But, if mishandled or misguided those very same technologies will be what drive us to extinction.

It seems as though technology has been a sort of Faustian Bargain for our species: it giveth and it taketh away.

But unlike the fictional character of Faust in the story who makes a deal with the Devil, exchanging his soul for unlimited knowledge and power, the only pact we've made is with ourselves and we don't have to sacrifice our morality in order to

achieve unlimited knowledge, power, and immortality for our descendants.

Further development of technology that is informed and structured by our morality may very well be the key to success. Our humanity might be the most important technology we have ever created.

We live in the best of times and the worst of times. It's the best of times because of all the amazing technologies we've developed and benefit from, but it's the worst of times because the stakes have become so high and the margin for error so low.

I hope we choose to make our present time an age of wisdom and not foolishness, that we endeavour to use our technology wisely to create a world in which our descendants might inherit not only the Earth but the cosmos too because they're going to need it.



Scott Dewing is a technologist, writer, and educator. This is a condensed version of his 2019 TEDxAshland Talk.

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The Future In The Instant (*Macbeth*)

Play on! Shakespeare (POS) started in the fall of 2015 at OSF with the aim of translating Shakespeare's plays into contemporary English. Although it has not been without its critics, I confess that I am a dedicated fan of POS, to the extent that when my wife, Terry, and I were planning a trip to Europe in 2018, we built it around seeing the POS production of *Troilus and Cressida* in Prague. At the end of its three-year tenure at OSF, the producing team for POS, led by Lue Douthit, was able to secure continued funding to form a new not-for-profit company. In January 2019, they established this company, with a mission to enhance the understanding of Shakespeare's plays in performance for theatre professionals, students and audiences by engaging with contemporary translations. Translations of all 39 plays attributed to Shakespeare were presented at the Play on! Festival in New York in the summer of 2019.

The lockdown and the closure of theatres came just after Taylor Bailey, associate producer at POS, had taken part in a webinar via Zoom, and Taylor was convinced that POS could use Zoom in one way or another to continue the work of POS during this hiatus. It was Lue Douthit who devised a framework for the Zoom performances which was to become "First Reads", a series aiming to replicate the initial table read on the first day of rehearsal.

Thanks to the generosity of the Hitz Foundation, POS was able to provide an honorarium to everyone involved in the project. In total the series involved some 160 actors and theatre professionals, all of whom had had some experience of POS, and so didn't need to have the project explained, although since each of the readings had a different cast, they all had to be introduced to Zoom.

There were ten readings in the series, streaming live each Friday, beginning with *Henry IV, Part One* on March 27, and ending with *Hamlet* on May 29. These were supplemented by two free-standing readings to which I shall refer later. In a bizarre coincidence, one of the early readings was *Edward III*, about a monarch whose reign was beset with plague (although this does not feature in the play itself): the theatres were not closed (there were none to close) but public spectacles were abandoned.

The original notion for "First Reads" was to have two readings a week for five weeks, each preceded by a lecture, but this proved too ambitious and the final format was a weekly reading, with introductions from Lue, the director and the dramaturg of the selected play, but not a lecture. The team assumed the lockdown would be over by the end of May. The plays cho-

The series had to confront a number of issues thrown up by using Zoom for theatre.

sen could have come from a single genre (eg. all histories), but eventually the team settled on those translations which had not been produced in full before.

The series had to confront a number of issues thrown up by using Zoom for theatre. There could be no comic business, no costumes (aside from the occasional hat when an actor had double roles), music was difficult to incorporate, as were crowd scenes, and such activities as kneeling, bowing and fighting did not transfer easily into the new medium. Instead, attention focused on language.

The process demonstrated on many occasions that the contemporary POS translations could help make plot and themes clearer. For example, in *King John*, the word commodity in the phrase "kings break faith upon commodity" was replaced with "self-interest", which not only clarified the meaning, it even scanned.

I found the discussions preceding the readings full of interest. Actors posed pertinent questions, frequently about the pronunciation of names (often an issue with the Roman plays and the history plays), and the dramaturgs provided insights into context—I had forgotten that *Titus Andronicus*, like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, refers to *Pyramus and Thisbe* (okay—perhaps I never knew...).

The performances themselves had some of the characteristics of radio plays or audio books, but they differed in, for example, indicating to the audience when non-speaking characters were nevertheless on stage and reacting.

Two other companies have followed the lead of POS in performing translations on Zoom. The National Asian American Theatre Company read Hansol Jung's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* in May, and Alison Carey's translation of *Twelfth Night* was "Zoomed" by the Hero Theater in June.

In the absence of live professional theatre, my hope is that POS will embark on another streaming series. In the meantime, my final word on Zoom, at least for now, is that it is likely to continue to be used as part of the rehearsal process. It obviates the need to rent a rehearsal space for that first read-through, it removes travel costs (and travel time) for cast and crew, and it's environmentally-friendly. Welcome to the future in an instant.



Geoff Ridden has taught in universities in Africa, Europe and North America. Since moving to Ashland in 2008, he has become a familiar figure on radio, in the theatre, in the lecture hall and on the concert stage. He is artistic director of the Classic Readings Theatre Company and has a particular interest in adaptations of the plays of Shakespeare. Email geoff.ridden@gmail.com



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With misinformation becoming a feature of the pandemic and the 2020 election, there are risks to having fewer sources of reliable information to vet candidates.

Layoffs Leave Coverage Void

Newsrooms in Oregon and around the country are being hollowed out by the pandemic. What will that mean during an election year?

In late March, as the threat of the coronavirus pandemic was becoming serious in Oregon, Andrew Cutler learned about a more specific crisis looming on the horizon at his job. Cutler is the editor and publisher of the *Hermiston Herald* and the *East Oregonian* in Pendleton. He got the news from the publisher at their parent company, EO Media Group.

"Our ad revenue basically fell off the table," Cutler said. "It plummeted."

With the advertising lifeblood of their paper suddenly cut off, the *East Oregonian* and their sister papers in Hermiston, La Grande, Baker City, John Day, and Enterprise took drastic measures. By the end of the month 47 employees would be laid off across the company.

Like so many parts of life in recent months, the pandemic has laid bare vulnerabilities of institutions already on the brink. In the case of journalism: the reliance on advertising revenue.

"Newspapers are typically reactionary to whatever's going on in the outside world," Cutler told me. "So, when something like this happens, there's always a trickle-down effect."

These pandemic-inspired layoffs in eastern Oregon are not unique. July 30th marked the last issue of the Bandon *Western World*. It merged with the Coos Bay *World*, which at the same time, went from five print publications per week to just two. Countless news outlets instituted furloughs, including Jefferson Public Radio, where staff are furloughed 20% through the end of the year along with many other employees at Southern Oregon University. NPR's national network is projecting a \$30-43 million deficit next year.

The Poynter Institute has, so far, tracked at least 50 news outlets around the country that have gone out of business completely or been closed through mergers with other outlets since the pandemic started.

Diminished newsrooms are an even bigger deal in 2020 than other years. On top of the most consequential news story in decades—the pandemic and its many tendrils—the coming 2020 election should mean more reporting, not less. Communities voting in local races have the most to lose with less election coverage, like the vacancy of Democrat Arnie Roblan in State Senate District 5 in Coos Bay. But there are implications for national races too.

The majority of EO Media Group's newspapers are in eastern Oregon, where the race for Congressional District 2 will play out between Republican Cliff Bentz, Democrat Alex Spenser and Independent candidate Patrick Archer. The race will be covered by reporters in Portland and Salem, as well as here in Ashland, but institutional knowledge in eastern Oregon newsrooms of those candidates before to the 2020 election season helps voters know who they are outside of campaigning.

In 2016 the presidential election was defined by the power of social media, an unmediated form of communication with few meaningful ways to vet the accuracy of information. With misinformation becoming a feature of the pandemic and the 2020 election, there are risks to having fewer sources of reliable information to vet candidates.

For example, Jo Rae Perkins, the 2020 Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in Oregon follows QAnon conspiracy theories. She won the primary in May and will face Democrat Jeff Merkley in November.

Between the election, the economies of Oregon and the nation in freefall, more than 160,000 deaths from COVID-19 in the U.S., and racial justice protests in big cities and small towns alike, Cutler says it would be hard to cover all the stories right now, even before laying off 47 employees.

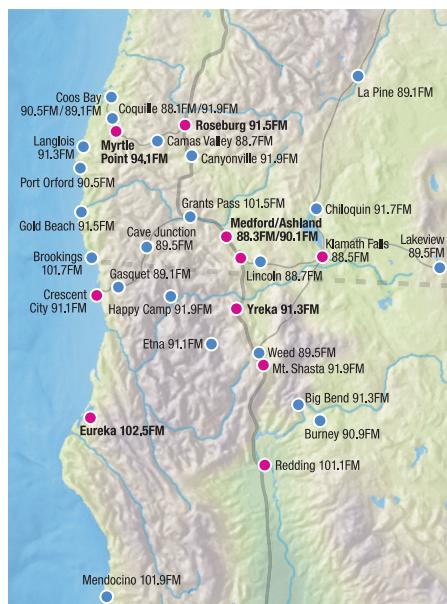
"I think what papers lose is the ability to really dig in," he said. "Like a combine [tractor] moving through a field, all you're doing is churning through story after story after story, just trying to get stuff for the papers."

In light of everything else, the fate of local newsrooms may seem small. Will we be worse for it? How much will it matter? I don't know. But as reliable information disappears, how will we know what we don't know?



Erik Neumann is an experienced radio producer and reporter who grew up alongside the Puget Sound. He's passionate about telling the human stories behind America's health care system, public lands and the environment, and the arts. He got his Masters degree at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. Erik joined JPR after several years as a staff reporter at KUER, the NPR station in Salt Lake City, where he focused on health care coverage. He was a 2019 Mountain West fellow with the Association of Health Care Journalists and is a contributor at Kaiser Health News, a non-profit news service committed to in-depth coverage of health care policy and politics.

Classics & News Service



- FM Transmitters provide extended regional service. (KSOR, 90.1FM is JPR's strongest transmitter and provides coverage throughout the Rogue Valley.)
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5:00am	Morning Edition
7:00am	First Concert
12:00pm	Siskiyou Music Hall
4:00pm	All Things Considered
6:30pm	The Daily
7:00pm	Exploring Music
8:00pm	State Farm Music Hall

Saturday

5:00am	Weekend Edition
8:00am	First Concert
10:00am	WFMT Opera Series
2:00pm	Played in Oregon
3:00pm	The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

4:00pm	All Things Considered
5:00pm	New York Philharmonic
7:00pm	State Farm Music Hall

Sunday

5:00am	Weekend Edition
9:00am	Millennium of Music
10:00am	Sunday Baroque
12:00pm	Siskiyou Music Hall
2:00pm	Performance Today Weekend
4:00pm	All Things Considered
5:00pm	Chicago Symphony Orchestra
7:00pm	Deutsche Welle Festival Concerts
9:00pm	State Farm Music Hall

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- Sept 11 – *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner
- Sept 19 – *Fidelio* by Ludwig van Beethoven
- Sept 26 – *Don Giovanni* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- Oct 3 – *Death in Venice* by Benjamin Britten
- Oct 10 – *Don Pasquale* by Gaetano Donizetti
- Oct 17 – *Werther* by Jules Massenet
- Oct 24 – *Agrippina* by George Frideric Handel
- Oct 31 – *Norma* by Vincenzo Bellini

PROGRAM CHANGES

JPR will make a handful of program changes in September, including the addition of a new daily talk show from KERA in Dallas called *Think*, and the popular *Snap Judgement* — described as ‘storytelling with a beat.’ We’re also bringing on *Folk Alley* and *Woodsongs* permanently as replacement for *Live From Here*, which has unfortunately ended production due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We’re also adding *Conversations from the World Cafe* to replace *Q the Music*, which was cut by the CBC.

— Eric Teel, Director of FM Network Programming

Rhythm & News Service



● FM Transmitters provide extended regional service.

● FM Translators provide low-powered local service.

Stations

KSMF 89.1 FM
ASHLAND

KSBA 88.5 FM
COOS BAY

KSKF 90.9 FM
KLAMATH FALLS

KNCA 89.7 FM
BURNNEY/REDDING

KNSQ 88.1 FM
MT. SHASTA

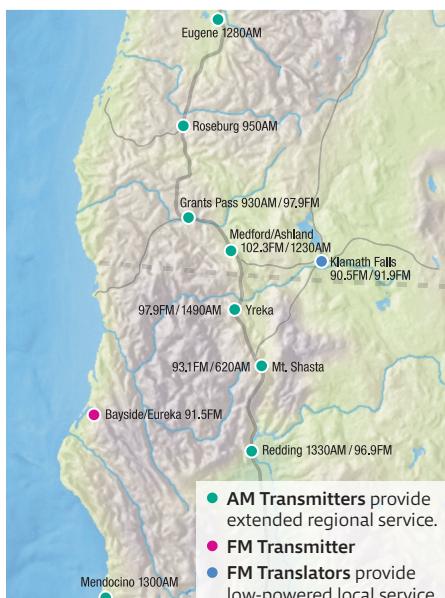
KVYA 91.5 FM
CEDARVILLE/
SURPRISE VALLEY

Translators

Callahan/Ft Jones 89.1 FM
Cave Junction 90.9 FM

Grants Pass 97.5 FM
Port Orford 89.3 FM
Roseburg 91.9 FM
Yreka 89.3 FM

News & Information Service



● AM Transmitters provide extended regional service.
● FM Transmitter
● FM Translators provide low-powered local service.

Translators **Klamath Falls** 90.5 FM / 91.9 FM **Ashland/Medford** 102.3 FM
Yreka 97.9 FM **Grants Pass** 97.9 FM **Mt. Shasta** 93.1 FM **Redding** 96.9 FM

Stations

KJKK AM 1230
TALENT

KAGI AM 930
GRANTS PASS

KTBR AM 950
ROSEBURG

KRVM AM 1280
EUGENE

KSYC AM 1490
YREKA

KMJC AM 620
MT. SHASTA

KPMO AM 1300
MENDOCINO

KNHM 91.5 FM
BAYSIDE/EUREKA

KJPR AM 1330
SHASTA LAKE CITY/
REDDING

Monday through Friday

5:00am BBC World Service
7:00am 1A
8:00am The Jefferson Exchange
9:58am StarDate
10:00am The Takeaway
11:00am Here & Now
1:00pm BBC News Hour
1:30pm The Daily
2:00pm Think
3:00pm Fresh Air
4:00pm PRI's The World
5:00pm On Point
6:00pm 1A
7:00pm Fresh Air (repeat)
8:00pm The Jefferson Exchange
(repeat of 8am broadcast)
9:58pm StarDate
10:00pm BBC World Service

Saturday

5:00am BBC World Service
7:00am Inside Europe
8:00am Day 6
9:00am Freakonomics Radio
10:00am Planet Money
11:00am Hidden Brain
12:00pm Living on Earth
1:00pm Science Friday
3:00pm To the Best of Our Knowledge
5:00pm Politics with Amy Walter
6:00pm Selected Shorts
7:00pm BBC World Service

Sunday

5:00am BBC World Service
8:00am On The Media
9:00am Innovation Hub
10:00am Reveal
11:00am This American Life
12:00pm TED Radio Hour
1:00pm Political Junkie
2:00pm Fresh Air Weekend
3:00pm Milk Street Radio
4:00pm Travel with Rick Steves
5:00pm To the Best of Our Knowledge
7:00pm BBC World Service

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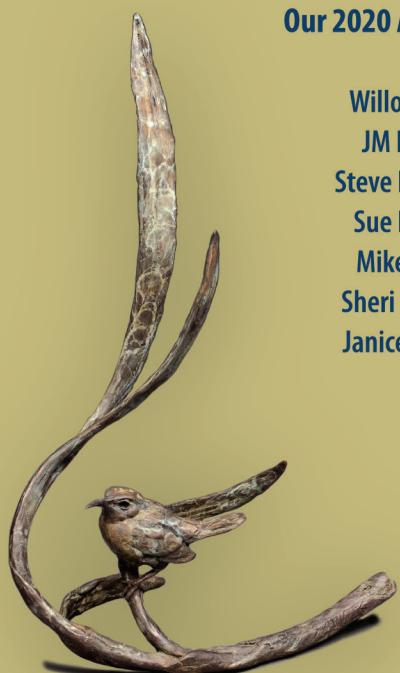
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JM Brodrick
Steve Bennett
Sue Bennett
Mike Bryant
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Ilene Gienger Stanfield
Bonnie Griffith
Norma Holmes
Charity Hubbard
Mark Holland & Cindy Lewis
Dale Landrum
Karen Leoni

Chris Manwaring
David Mensing
Judy Phearnson
Don Prechtel
Chuck Prudhomme
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RECORDINGS

ANASTASIA TSIULCAS

If you must rehearse, do it outdoors with social distancing — and with masks.

Is Singing Together Safe In The Era Of Coronavirus? Not Really, Experts Say

Back in the days before the coronavirus pandemic, lots of people found community and comfort in singing together, whether at school, as a form of worship, in amateur groups or performing as professionals. Last year, Chorus America reported that some 54 million Americans — that is, more than 15% of the entire country's population — participated in some kind of organized group singing. And that study revealed that nearly three-quarters of those polled felt less lonely. Eighty percent said it made them "more optimistic, mindful and resilient."

"The community is the most important thing we have," says Francisco J. Núñez, the founder and artistic director of the Young People's Chorus of New York City (YPC), which includes some 2,000 kids aged 7 to 18 from across the city. And he's even more aware of what his students have lost in the pandemic.

After the shutdown in New York in mid-March, the YPC ensembles started meeting by Zoom just to talk. "Just seeing each other online that helped us socially, emotionally," Núñez says.

But that same month, singers and choral directors across the country became concerned after a chorus in Washington state made national headlines. Sixty singers in the Skagit Valley Chorale showed up to a two-and-a-half-hour rehearsal. Fifty-three of them became sick with the coronavirus, and two people died.

The CDC issued a report about the group in May, writing: "SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19] might be highly transmissible in certain settings, including group singing events." But since then, the CDC has erased that messaging from its current posted guidelines, due to what American scientists worry are political concerns.

"Singing in a room for an extended period of time, in close contact with lots of people and no ventilation — that's a recipe for disaster," says Shelly Miller, a professor at the University of Colorado Boulder. Along with Jelena Srebric at the University of Maryland, Miller is leading a six-month research project looking at singers' and other musicians' transmission of aerosol particles.

Their team's research is funded by a consortium of organizations — from professional advocacy groups like Opera America to associations representing high school bands and choruses — who are all trying to figure out how they can get back together safely.

In preliminary research published on July 13, Miller and her fellow researchers found that singers, as well as certain wind and brass instrumentalists, generate respiratory aerosols at high rates. In other words, they spew a lot of droplets into the air when they warble or blow. A second round of research published on



ALEXEY KONKOV/COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

The Young People's Chorus of New York City, performing back in better times.

Aug. 6 reinforced those findings and the team's recommendations.

Jose-Luis Jimenez, who is also a professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, explains the physics.

"You have the air that's coming out on your respiratory tube, your mouth, and your nose, and there's some liquid that's lining all of your respiratory system," he says.

"And when the air is going very quickly," Jimenez continues, alluding to the force with which singers and some instrumentalists expel air, "it can basically grab a little bit of that material and put it in a particle, and then you expel it out into the air. That's what happens. So anything that makes the air go faster or more strongly or produce more air is putting out more respiratory particles. If you're singing, you're breathing in a lot of air, you're breathing out very forcefully, and you're also moving your vocal cords. The vocal cords are wet, they're covered in this fluid, they're vibrating, and that can also produce more particles."

As a result, Jimenez warns, group singing remains "extremely dangerous and irresponsible," pointing out numerous other super-spreading incidents among choruses worldwide. After the CDC released its report on the Washington singers, Jimenez and nine colleagues from across the U.S., Australia, Europe and the U.K., including Miller, wrote their own paper on the Skagit chorus and their "superspreading event."

Recordings

Continued from page 27

Jimenez cautions against thinking that the Washington choir was an isolated case. "There have been other cases of super-spreading in choirs at least in the Netherlands [resulting in 102 ill people and four related deaths], Austria, Canada, Germany, England, South Korea and Spain," he says. "And those were just the ones that we found."

Jimenez has also created a publicly available and free tool that calculates coronavirus infection risk in various scenarios, including being in classrooms, participating in demonstrations, taking public transportation – and singing in a chorus.

Additionally, Miller's research shows that indoors, the risk of infection rises sharply if someone is exposed to viral particles for longer than 30 minutes.

So Miller says, if you must rehearse, do it outdoors with social distancing – and with masks. She adds that if outdoor meetings just aren't feasible, "What we're recommending right now is definitely staying six feet apart with masks, with good ventilation, in very short duration of 30 minutes, with breaks to air out the room."

But 30-minute meetings, and ensuring proper ventilation in schools and rehearsal spaces, may not be possible for many ensembles.

Miller's team will update their findings regularly before offering peer-reviewed, finalized results. "Normally with these kinds of studies," Miller says, "we don't release data until we are sure about what we're finding or saying. But right now, we're just like, 'Oh my goodness, we have to try to help with decisions – we want to keep people safe.' I feel like we are saving lives by trying to understand realistically what is happening."

The situation is even more dangerous for professionally trained singers – "vocal athletes," as Dr. Lucinda Halstead calls them. She's an otolaryngologist and a professor at the Medical University of South Carolina. She also has a particular interest in singers, and serves as the president of the Performing Arts Medicine Association. She says that those vocal athletes are physical powerhouses, in terms of the "amount of breath support and muscular integration they need to have to drive the vocal folds."

And with that power and agility, she says, comes the possibility of increasing viral transmission.

Both Jimenez and Miller contributed to an open letter that 239 scientists wrote to the World Health Organization in July, asking the organization to reconsider its position that viral transmission via aerosolized particles was not its major concern. The WHO responded by maintaining that the coronavirus is primarily spread through close contact, but that more research into aerosolized transmission is needed – and specifically referenced choir practice as one possible scenario.

As of now, the WHO's concern about group singing doesn't match up with current CDC guidelines.

In late May, the CDC posted guidance regarding singing for leaders of faith-based organizations, advising that they suspend or at least decrease use of choirs and musical ensembles as well as congregational singing and chanting.

But that specific guidance about singing was removed from the CDC website within a week. NPR reported that an unnamed federal official said that it was taken down because it had not been cleared by the White House.

Proposals to curtail singing in church settings have inevitably caused tension with Americans who believe that their freedom to practice their religion is being infringed upon.

In June, Vice President Mike Pence made a high-profile appearance at a Texas church event that featured a choir of about 100 singers – who performed unmasked. His appearance was billed as the "Celebrate Freedom Rally," meant to "celebrate our freedom as Americans and our freedom in Christ with you through worship."

Some localities have tried to enact measures specifically to address group singing, given scientists' concerns. In July, California moved to ban singing and chanting during worship services as a result of rising infection rates in the state.

Back in New York City, as weeks of lockdown turned into months, Francisco J. Núñez says that the Zoom chats weren't enough to buoy his students' spirits. "The longer it lasted, the more sad the children became," he observes. "And the conversations were starting to get difficult. So we needed to do something. That's when the singing started to happen."

Students sent in videos of themselves singing and Núñez and his team stitched them together to create the effect of a unified chorus.

The first project was a performance of "You'll Never Walk Alone," from Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical *Carousel*, that the group dedicated to New York's essential workers.

As the spring turned into summer, Núñez found that the kids he works with were carrying another burden. YPC became an outlet for his students – who are very diverse racially, ethnically and socioeconomically – to discuss racial injustice as protests broke out nationwide. "They started talking to each other," Núñez observes, "about what it's like to be a Black or brown young person in New York City right now, what it's like to be a white person, an ally."

Núñez says that he has tried to embrace the possibilities of this new virtual reality. "I don't see 120 kids getting together in a room right now," he says. "But I do see creating new ways. Classical music is undergoing a transition. Children's education is going to go into transition. I think it's a wake-up call for us."

The group's final concert of the season debuted on YouTube last month. Its title was "Forward Together" – striking a hopeful note, no matter what's ahead.

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Anastasia Tsioulcas is a reporter for NPR Music. She covers breaking news in the music industry, as well as a wide range of musical genres and artists, for NPR's flagship news programs and NPR Music.

ERIN ROSS &
EMILY CURETON

For months, Owens and other rural lawmakers have been advocating for rural school districts to be allowed to customize reopening plans with local public health officials.

New Metrics Make It Easier For Rural Oregon Schools To Reopen

The Oregon Department of Education has announced new health metrics that make it easier for rural schools to reopen. But districts are still trying to figure out what these benchmarks mean.

How and when Oregon kids will go back to classrooms is still an open question, with the opening of school fast approaching. This week, the state's Department of Education bowed to pressure from rural community leaders and released new standards for in-person instruction in the state's most sparsely-populated areas.

ODE Director Colt Gill said that the goal of these updated protocols is to allow rural schools the flexibility to reopen their doors while ensuring that any school-related outbreaks remain small.

"We want to make sure no local health authority would be overwhelmed by contact tracing. We want to reduce the number of students and staff interacting," said Gill.

Counties with populations of less than 30,000 will be able to open, even if they don't meet the statewide standard of fewer than 30 cases per 100,000 residents. Those counties can open schools that serve fewer than 250 students if certain criteria are met. Conditions include limiting the total number of cases in a county over the previous three weeks to no more than 30. If more than half of those cases occurred in the final week of that three-week period schools would have to remain closed, because it could indicate increasing community transmission.

There can't be any transmission happening in the school community and only schools where less than 10% of students travel from another area will qualify.

In counties with a population of fewer than six people per square mile, schools can reopen regardless of size if there have been fewer than 30 cases total in the last three weeks. The schools can't serve a "significant number" of students commuting from other districts, and there can't be active outbreaks in commuters' hometowns.

"We'll take what we can get given the circumstances, and we're thankful the state was willing to hear the feedback of our rural communities and find a common-sense solution," said Crook County Superintendent Dr. Sara Johnson in a Tuesday press release.

ODE's revisions mean that in her district, two of Central Oregon's smallest schools – Paulina and Brothers – will open their doors next month. Crook County officials are among school administrators across the state scrambling to decipher the guidelines and decide which facilities can have kids attend classes in-person.



EMILY CURETON / OPB

Oregon State Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, wants rural schools to reopen.

Adding to the uncertainty, ODE officials have said they expect to update the guidance a few more times before school starts.

"I think it's a great first step," said Rep. Mark Owens of the revised guidance for small population counties. The Republican from Crane represents Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur and part of Lake counties – a vast swath of Oregon with a small fraction of the state population, where statewide rulemaking has long been a political target.

For months, Owens and other rural lawmakers have been advocating for rural school districts to be allowed to customize reopening plans with local public health officials: "I have no fear of COVID-19 spreading rapidly in our schools. If it does, actions will be taken, proper precautions will be maintained, and we'll have lessons learned," he said.

ODE said that rural health departments face unique challenges tracking and containing COVID-19. "For those very low population, but very large geographic counties, that does become a challenge," said Gill, adding that health departments were consulted when making guidelines and that larger counties do have bigger health departments.

Owens also acknowledged that after years of budget cuts, and in some cases total defunding, many of the rural health departments these school plans now depend on "are not set up to deal with a global pandemic, or be successful without help."

JPR News Focus: Education

Continued from page 29

"The state is going to have to step up with some CARES Act funding in order to make sure that we can give them extra personnel," Owens added.

Owens is married to a teacher, with a 16-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son.

"I honestly feel that my family will be safer with the practices in place in school than they are when traveling to Home Depot, or traveling to some of the other things that are allowed currently," he said.

If residents of one town frequently travel to another for work or to shop, outbreaks in those communities would also cause schools to close.

"We wanted provisions to address rural towns that are more of a bedroom community to a city that might be impacted by COVID-19," Gill said, "[Local public health authorities] do need to understand if the majority of that community works in or shops in another community that is impacted, they're not isolated."

Because some rural towns are far apart or aren't connected by major roads, some schools can stay open even if there is active community transmission in the county.

"The idea behind this guidance is that some of our very large geographic counties, where towns are spread out, could have an outbreak in one community, and then for thousands of square miles, no outbreaks," Gill said.

That doesn't just apply to in-state communities. Officials will also need to take into account outbreaks in nearby communities across state lines.

On the state's eastern border with Idaho, Malheur County has become a hotspot for the virus in some areas, while other communities remain untouched. At over 10,000-square-miles, it's the second-largest county in the state and a case study in the complexity of regulating Oregon's diverse geography.

Zach Olson's two kids were attending school in Nyssa, where the infection rate is nearly five times the state average, as of last week's OHA report. It takes over an hour to drive from there, to the school in Jordan Valley, both within Malheur County.

Olson said he's fortunate to be able to afford a nanny while his family juggles child care, and resentful that other kinds of business reopened before schools.

"Every day I walk by a closed elementary school and then numerous open bars, restaurants, and pot shops. The governor created that situation and it can not stand," Olson said in an email.

The dad of two boys was critical of how often the guidelines have changed leading up to the start of the fall semester.

"It is great that the governor keeps taking steps towards prioritizing elementary and rural schools, but she is giving us whiplash," he said.

The updated metrics also include exemptions for rural school districts in more populated counties. For urban schools to reopen, there needs to be less than 10 cases per 100,000 for three consecutive weeks. But rural schools can reopen if the school serves fewer than 250 people if there is no transmission in the community, and if they meet the same case metrics for counties with smaller populations.

Many people in Oregon have reported delayed test results in the last month, sometimes waiting for as long as three weeks to find out if they have COVID-19. To make sure counties can identify outbreaks in time to close schools, presumptive cases do not need to be confirmed with a laboratory test to count.

As director of the Oregon Department of Education, Gill has the authority to close a school facility and address any complaints raised about flouting its guidance.

"These actions include the potential to withhold State School Fund (SSF) payments if needed and as a means of last resort," according to the state guidelines.

This article was originally published on August 12, 2020 at opb.org

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Emily Cureton is OPB's Central Oregon Bureau Chief. She formerly contributed award-winning programming to Georgia Public Broadcasting and Jefferson Public Radio, and reporting to community newspapers like the Del Norte Triplicate in Crescent City, California, and the Big Bend Sentinel in Marfa, Texas. She can be reached at ecureton@opb.org.

Erin Ross is a writer and researcher for Oregon Public Broadcasting, specializing in science and environmental coverage. Her work also appears on "Oregon Field Guide."

JES BURNS

Owl Research Leads Oregon Scientist To New Frontier In Baby Hearing Tests

Detecting hearing loss in babies is kind of a Catch-22. It's important to uncover hearing issues early to start therapies to help them develop language. But because babies don't have language to tell you what they hear, it's difficult to diagnose the severity of their hearing loss.

A close-up of an eye dominates the computer monitor in Avinash Bala's lab. It's uncomfortably close, blinking like it's irritated. A vaguely female voice is repeating the word "bah" in the background every few seconds.

"The eighth trial is coming up," Bala says quietly. "The tenth one will be a different sound, and we should pay attention to that because I'm expecting it to be really big dilation."

Bala is a neuroscientist at the University of Oregon, and although he calls his workspace the "Baby Hearing Lab," the eye

on the screen is decidedly adult. It belongs to Jared Acosta-King, a graduate student who Bala flagged down to help demonstrate a new hearing test that could constitute a major step forward in diagnosing hearing loss in babies, toddlers and adults who have difficulty communicating.

"Bah."

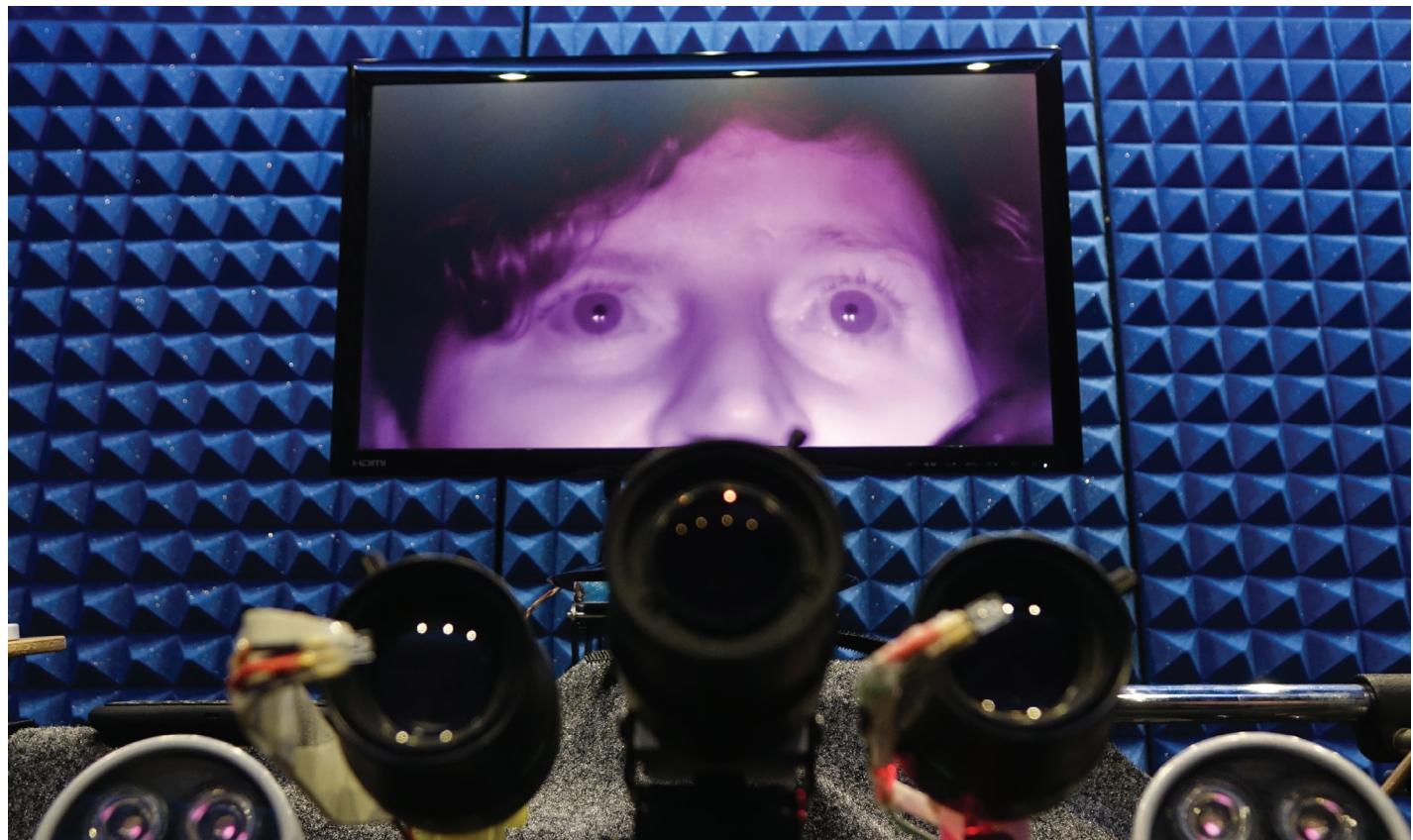
"This is nine. The next one will be a 'pah,'" Bala says.

Acosta-King is in a sound booth next door. He's sitting in front of a camera that captures his pupil in high relief.

"Pah."

Acosta-King's pupil grows noticeably in size in response to the new sound.

"There we go," Bala says. "It is so reliable, and it is so predictable, and that is what makes it so eminently usable."



The Baby Hearing Lab at the University of Oregon is testing a new way to determine hearing loss in young children and adults who cannot communicate.

JES BURNS / OPB

JPR News Focus: Science

Continued from page 31

Catch-22

Detecting hearing loss in babies is kind of a Catch-22. It's important to uncover hearing issues early to start therapies to help them develop language. But because babies don't have language to tell you what they hear, it's difficult to diagnose just how severe their hearing loss is.

Bala's new test relies on an involuntary pupil response, one that is triggered when humans hear a new sound. It's a reaction he figured out in an unlikely way – while he was studying owls.

About 20 years ago Bala was working on a research project studying how barn owls hear the world as a way to better understand how human brains process sound. He was trying to condition the owls to respond when they heard different sounds.

"We had the owl in a quiet room. We had a video camera, like a security camera, watching the owl," he said.

While they were setting up the experiment – going in and out of the owl's room – the odd door would slam down the hall. Or someone would drop something on a desk.

"And I realized that every time something unexpected happened, owl's eyes seemed to get brighter," he said.

They showed brighter on the video because the owl's eyes were dilating in response to the new sounds, reflecting more light back to the camera – like a cat in headlights.

The owl-conditioning effort itself wasn't going well.

"Avinash was extremely frustrated," recalled Institute of Neuroscience co-director Terry Takahashi. "He came up and said, 'Hey, this doesn't work. The only thing that happens when I play sound is that the pupil dilates.' And then all of a sudden, we all stop and go, 'Wait a minute!'"

They recognized this involuntary pupil response could be used to measure hearing in the owls.

Pretty soon thereafter, Bala figured out that humans have the same involuntary response to new sounds – any new sound, including the same word at different volumes and words with slight variations like the "bah" and "pah" used in the lab's tests.

"It's exciting when you can take something that's really basic science, like how do owls figure out where sounds are coming from? What's the computer circuitry in the brain that does that? And all of a sudden, to take a technique that was refined in owls and apply it to human hearing, it's just something that I never had expected," Takahashi said.

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It's not known why this response happens to new sounds. Bala says it could be a byproduct of how organisms have evolved to orient themselves in the world – like when you unconsciously turn your head towards a sound. Another possibility is that a larger pupil size also allows animals to hone their focus on a specific object – which could be useful if a new sound signals the presence of prey or possible danger.

"What I realized was that we could also use this in people who are unable to respond for one reason or another. And the biggest such group of people is infants, because babies can't tell us what they're thinking," Bala said.

Current techniques

It's standard practice in the United States to screen babies for hearing loss within the first month of life. Infants who are flagged for potential hearing issues are sent for further testing, but the tests audiologists use aren't the same "tell-us-if-you-hear-the-sound" tests older children and adults use.

"Research has shown that the first six months of life are really critical for a child's brain development. And if we were to wait until babies are old enough to do a regular hearing test, that really nice window of opportunity where all that brain development is happening has passed," said pediatric audiologist Kristy Knight.

Knight works at OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital and is partnering with Bala on the project.

Knight says there are several ways audiologists screen young children for hearing loss, but they all have their limitations.

One measures the physical vibration of the cochlea but can't detect if the brain is registering those signals.

Another uses warbling sounds at different pitches and volumes to prompt a baby to look a certain direction when they hear something. But depending on the age of the child being tested, it can be difficult to keep them focused enough to get good results.

Still another test looks at brainwaves of infants exposed to different noises. But this test requires that the baby fall asleep for about an hour while in the office. And interpreting the results is a subjective endeavor that requires training and experience.

"One of the things that we really struggle [with] young children is knowing, can they recognize the difference between sounds like 'else' versus 'elf', for example? Our regular hearing tests don't tell us that. We have to wait till the child has some amount of language development to really measure that clinically," Knight said.

She said this pupil response-focused hearing test would give audiologists another tool.

"What we're proposing is that if we have a test that doesn't require expertise, any audiologists can administrate," Bala said. "What it involves essentially is putting a baby in his mother's lap or in a high chair playing sounds... and at the end of 15 minutes, the computer just comes that gives you up yes or no answer."

The version of the test designed for babies will keep their attention towards the camera with an animated video. A computer algorithm will be used to measure changes in pupil size as the different sounds are played.

Bala recently received a Small Business Innovation Research Grant from the National Institutes of Health to further develop the new test. This fall, he plans to produce a prototype that is more-streamlined than the set-up currently being used at the Baby Hearing Lab.

And if COVID-19 allows, Bala says he hopes to start real-world testing the new baby hearing test at OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Portland early next year.



Jes Burns is a reporter for OPB's Science & Environment unit. Jes has a degree in English literature from Duke University and a master's degree from the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communications.

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EMMA BOWMAN

The Escapist Land Of 'Cottagecore,' From Marie Antoinette To Taylor Swift

The promotional black and white photos from Taylor Swift's new album Folklore show the pop star shedding her lipsticked glamour for an ethereal frock to frolic in the meadow.

For those who've watched these signifiers bubble up on corners of the Internet for the past few years, Swift had just introduced a new aesthetic to the mainstream. The packaging of the pared-down record, produced during lockdown in her Los Angeles home, epitomizes a romanticization of the rural lifestyle known as "cottagecore," and it's seeing a marked boom during the coronavirus pandemic.

Visually, cottagecore looks like this: sourdough bread starters, foraged mushrooms, open meadows, freshly picked flowers, homegrown produce, knitting, baking pies, and, yes, rustic cottages. The pastoral interpretations live on TikTok, Pinterest, and prominently on Tumblr.

At a time when many feel trapped and overwhelmed, cottagecore offers a wholesome, back-to-basics escape. In that way, it might be seen as the antidote of "doomscrolling," a habit that's intensified during today's crises in which one scrolls through the endless feed of bad news.

"It was comfortable and soothing and kind of helped people process things," said Amanda Brennan, the content and community associate with Tumblr who's better known as the company's "meme librarian."

The blogging platform saw its first use of the cottagecore hashtag in March 2014. Six years later, Tumblr has seen an increase in fascination with bucolic imagery. Between March and April of this year, the hashtag #cottagecore jumped 153%, according to Tumblr. The number of "likes" on #cottagecore posts went up more than 500% in that time.

"It coincided with how we saw COVID-19 proliferate and more and more cases pop up in the U.S." Brennan said. "It basically trends with when the CDC releases more data on COVID cases."

There are subcultures within the aesthetic: "#cottagecorelesbians" is popular among lesbians; "cottagecore" and "goth cottagecore"



SOURCE: TUMBLR



SOURCE: INSTAGRAM.COM

ABOVE: Pastoral life in all its glory.

LEFT: "Fresh eggs and thrifted aprons in the summertime" Typical cottagecore images conjure up idyllic visions of rural life.

are darker versions of the same aesthetic. There are adjacent styles, too: "grandmacore," "goblincore," "frogcore." References to Black Lives Matter and other social justice causes are found in many posts.

Evienne Yanney, a 16-year-old in California, told Vox that, as a lesbian, she found solace in Instagram's cottagecore feeds, because "many of us aren't really accepted in the modern world, so the thought of running away to a cottage is really, I guess, kind of soothing."

The cottagecore aesthetic has caught the attention of a small museum in Berkshire, England, because it conjures up the hands-in-the-dirt imagery of European peasants.

"When these aesthetics rise up you think, 'Oh this is all a bit new,'" said Joe Vaughan, digital editor of the Museum of English Rural Life. "But there is actually a longer legacy of people putting on the clothes of the poor and kind of frolicking around in it."

In a viral tweet from the museum, Vaughan facetiously pinned French queen Marie Antoinette as an "icon" in the formation of cottagecore.

In the late 18th century, Antoinette, inspired by the naturalistic paintings of the time – something of a Tumblr board of her own – commissioned the construction of a rustic retreat in the greenery outside the Palace of Versailles, known as the Hamlet. The string of cottages gave her the feeling of escapism not far from palace grounds.

The queen would play the part of a shepherdess, alongside real servants, farm workers and milkmaids, according to Vaughan – a "pastoral nostalgia for a simple life [that] is simply not reflective of lived experience."

"When farming has been so difficult, there has been some sort of pain point in that people are going rural when the actual reality of rural existence has been a nightmare of COVID-19, like everything else," he said.

His intention, he said, is not to castigate those indulging in these ideals, but rather to point out that their indulgence has precedence in history.



SOURCE: TUMBLR

"♪ froggies wearing hats, frooggies wearing hats ♪"

Today, Tumblr's Brennan says cottagecore is no longer just on-screen daydreaming, but is manifested in real lifestyle changes.

For Dia Mowery, a 20-year-old who lives in Florida, that means sharing homemade bread with the people around her, thrifting clothes, buying local or growing her own food.

"Cottagecore is about embracing sustainability, community and kindness," she said.

Right now Mowery, who chose to postpone college this year due to the pandemic, said, "I'm finding that a lot of mental fatigue and anxieties have left me unable to do a lot of the things I'd like to do."

But on social media, her homebound isolation is customized to evoke a sense of escape, where you'll find old annotated books, freshly cut strawberries and vintage dresses.

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Emma Bowman
is a producer at NPR.



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA.ORG

The Marlborough Tower is visible in the garden of *Le Hameau de la Reine* (The Queen's Hamlet), after it was restored, in Versailles, France. The hamlet was commissioned during the winter of 1782-1783 by Queen Marie Antoinette who wanted to move away from the constraints of the court of Versailles.



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America's Original Original Sin

Why do Americans so quickly line up into opposing sides on topics that gather consensus without controversy in most other societies? Social media and cable news don't help us unify, but other nations have similar media landscapes. Most other cultures don't go at it hammer and tongs like we do.

Nobody wasn't outraged or at least saddened if they watched George Floyd's final words wept into Minneapolis pavement. Yet our polarization took hold almost immediately. "Defund the police" called for better budgets for social services and community outreach. Others insisted more order could come only from more law enforcement.

On a topic as anodyne as face coverings to limit the spread of the coronavirus, we have a culture war. (Again, our leaders fuel this controversy. But other countries have misguided leaders without the same effect.) Like it or not, we're living inside Dr. Suess's fable about star-bellied sneetches shunning those without a green star, and vice versa.

The current Black Lives Matter movement and our ridiculous face-mask face-off have more in common than you might think. It's past time for America to confront its original original sin. The moniker itself should give away the ending.

For almost four centuries, our nation has struggled to come to terms with its history with slavery and genocide. Racism came to be known as America's Original Sin. The first slave ship arrived in America in 1619, but something worse was already here.

Puritans had already settled Jamestown, without grand ambitions except for religious freedom. They wanted mostly to be left alone to live how they believed they should. Native Americans were already here, and not eager to be converted to an ultra-orthodox version of Christianity.

Some Indigenous were slaughtered. Others were shunned. All were disdained. When African slaves arrived later, Puritans usually demurred. Those who bought slaves prided themselves for treating theirs better than their secular neighbors. Slavery was only the first example of Americans' sneetch-like reflex to separate into "us" and "them."

The slavery was bad. The sanctimony was – and is – worse.

Everyone in America is holier than thou. It's just that everyone looks askance at a different "thou" they consider themselves holier than. It's not just police funding and public health strategies. It's everything. Did you bring your own shopping bag or not, and did the person ahead of you in the grocery lane do the same? We can't help but notice.

Does your neighbor drive an electric car or do they insist it's more important to buy American? Or do they justify their SUV around safety for their children? Or is driving itself proof that they lack the moral fiber interwoven with your carbon fiber bicycle frame?

Are you an Amazon shopper to save money or to reduce vehicle trips? Or is supporting local merchants more important than convenience and selection? Are the eggs in your refrigerator white or brown? I'll bet you buy the same color every time – because you somehow consider them (and yourself) better.

We're constantly watching for those we deem lesser. The habit of sanctimony has enslaved us all.



Don Kahle (fridays@dksez.com) writes a column each Friday for *The Register-Guard* and blogs at www.dksez.com.

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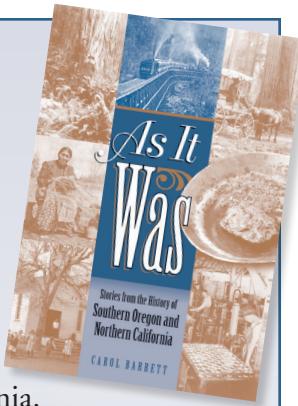
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APRIL EHRLICH

How Long Will It Take To Get My Coronavirus Test Results? That Depends

Some Oregonians say they're waiting days, sometimes weeks to get coronavirus test results, while others are waiting just a few minutes. So if you go get tested today, how long will you have to wait?

That all depends on what sort of test you get, where you get it, and where you live. Another key factor in recent weeks: whether the lab that's testing your swab sample is overbooked.

Labs are getting hit with an influx of tests. Part of that is because more people want to get tested — they might not have symptoms, but they just make sure they're not carrying the virus.

But the influx is mostly because more Oregonians than ever are becoming infected with the coronavirus.

"Our positivity rate has been increasing pretty steadily despite the fact that we're doing more tests," says public health physician Melissa Sutton of the Oregon Health Authority. "That's due to increasing cases."

Then there's an issue with supplies. Around May and June, most Oregon hospitals were doing pretty well. But by mid-July, they started to run low again.

"It's the swabs that you need to perform the test, it's the chemicals that are used to process the test, it's the test kits themselves," Sutton says.

Early in the pandemic, much of the country was running dangerously low on PPE, or personal protective equipment. That includes medical-grade face masks, gloves and gowns. Eventually, those supplies started to pick back up, and now many Oregon hospitals have at least a month's worth of PPE. But small towns are still struggling, mostly because it's harder to get deliveries out there.

Nonetheless, Sutton says supply levels and testing availability is still much better than it was in early March. If you wanted to get tested back then, you needed to have traveled from a high-risk country like China and be seriously ill with coronavirus symptoms, including difficulty breathing and fever.

Now it's possible to get tested even if you aren't showing symptoms. Cars are lining up at testing sites across the state while health workers — sometimes dressed head-to-toe in airlocked Hazmat suits — stick long nasal swabs deep into patients' noses to collect mucus samples.

There are two types of tests available to patients to see if they are actively infected with the coronavirus: an antigen test and a PCR test. They're not to be confused with the antibody test, which is a blood test that sees whether or not someone



RUSSELL TATE OF UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL CALL OUT TO CREATIVES VIA UNSPLASH

has had the coronavirus and gotten over it. Most public health officials don't recommend antibody tests for individuals, since they're not always accurate and they could give someone a false sense of security. Also, researchers aren't entirely sure if people could become infected with the coronavirus more than once. Still, antibody tests can be useful to gain a broader understanding of how the virus is spreading among a given region.

If you want to see if you're currently carrying the virus, with or without symptoms, your doctor will likely recommend one of two tests. Whichever they choose will likely have a big impact on your wait time to get results.

Antigen Test: Just A Few Minutes, But Not As Sensitive

The antigen test, also called a point-of-care test, is a nasal swab that can produce results in half an hour. They're more

NPR News Focus: COVID-19

Continued from page 39

convenient and readily available, but their accuracy varies. Some researchers say they're accurate only 50 percent of the time, while others say nearly 100 percent. It sort of depends on who makes the test.

"You're very unlikely to get a false positive," says Brent Kell, CEO of Valley Immediate Care in Ashland, which is administering antigen coronavirus tests. "The rub has been in the sensitivity."

Basically, researchers found that some antigen tests were producing too many false negatives, so patients were incorrectly told that they weren't infected with the coronavirus when, in fact, they were. Until late July, the state of Oregon required that all negative results from antigen tests be re-tested by a PCR test.

Kell says Valley Immediate Care is using an antigen test that has a 97 percent sensitivity rate, which is about as accurate as PCR tests.

Still, some public health officials only recommend antigen tests to people who aren't showing symptoms and who don't think they've been exposed to the coronavirus recently. For example, if you're traveling somewhere far away or attending a family gathering and you just want to make sure you're not unknowingly carrying the virus, the 30-minute antigen test might be a good fit.

PCR Test: Potentially More Accurate, But With Longer Wait Times

The PCR diagnostic test is also a nasal swab, but it requires health workers to send samples to a lab. Sometimes that lab is in-house, otherwise it has to be shipped to a commercial site. Either way, it's going to take a few days to process.

Many hospitals are solely using the PCR test, including the Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in Medford.

"That's really the most sensitive, high quality test," says emergency physician Courtney Wilson, who is also Vice President of Medical Affairs. "We tend to use that primarily to identify patients who could have an infection."

Asante has its own in-house lab, so it's generally able to produce results within the week. However, Wilson says the hospital is starting to run low on test kits. If it runs out, Asante will have to start sending samples to commercial or state labs, which could add several more days to people's wait times.



April Ehrlich began freelancing for Jefferson Public Radio in 2016. She officially joined the team as *Morning Edition* host and a *Jefferson Exchange* producer in August 2017.

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Greek-Style Braised Chickpeas With Tomatoes And Orange

On the Greek island of Ikaria, Diane Kochilas introduced us to an ultrasimple yet remarkably delicious dish of chickpeas layered with tomatoes, herbs, orange and honey that is baked for a couple hours to fuse and concentrate the flavors. Our version simmers canned chickpeas on the stovetop with many of the same ingredients and is ready in under an hour, yet the flavors are equally rich and complex. We liked this dish made with a strong, dark honey, such as buckwheat, but a milder variety works, too. Orange blossom honey is a good option, as it echoes the citrus notes of the orange zest and juice. Serve with crusty bread, and perhaps some briny feta alongside.

Don't forget to reserve ¼ cup of the chickpea liquid before draining. The liquid lends the dish body and flavor that water cannot.

45 MINUTES / 4 SERVINGS

Ingredients

- ½ Cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to serve
- 2 Tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 Tablespoons honey, divided (see note)
- 3 15½-Ounce cans chickpeas, drained, ¼ cup liquid reserved
- 28 Ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 Medium red onion, halved and thinly sliced

- 3 Medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 5 Bay leaves
- 1 Sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 Teaspoon grated orange zest, plus ¼ cup orange juice
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
- ½ Cup lightly packed fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Directions

1. In a large Dutch oven over medium, combine the oil, tomato paste and 1 tablespoon of honey. Cook, stirring often, until the tomato paste begins to brown, 6 to 7 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas, then stir in the tomatoes with their juices. Bring to a simmer over medium-high and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid has evaporated, 10 to 12 minutes.
2. Stir in the onion, garlic, bay, rosemary, orange juice, 1½ teaspoons each salt and pepper, and the reserved chickpea liquid. Bring to a simmer, then cover and cook over medium-low, stirring occasionally, until the onion has softened, 12 to 15 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat, then taste and season with salt and pepper. Stir in the oregano and orange zest. Transfer to a serving bowl. Sprinkle with parsley, then drizzle with the remaining honey and additional oil.

Christopher Kimball's Milk Street in downtown Boston—at 177 Milk Street—is home to the editorial offices and cooking school. It also is where they record *Christopher Kimball's Milk Street* television and radio shows. *Milk Street* is changing how we cook by searching the world for bold, simple recipes and techniques. For more information, go to 177milkstreet.com. You can hear *Milk Street Radio* Sundays at 3:00pm on JPR's *News & Information service*.



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CHELSEA ROSE

Picturing The Past

With disruptions to many summer plans, southern Oregon and northern California residents have been increasingly turning to their own backyards for recreation, inspiration, and much needed change of scenery. Lucky for us, there is no shortage of beautiful vistas to explore and fill our Instagram feeds. In an homage to these summer adventures, we invited historian Peter Boag on our July episode of *Underground History* to discuss his current research on early Western landscape painter William S. Parrott (1844-1916). Parrott arrived in Oregon as a child and spent his early decades working in the Willa-



PHOTO COURTESY PETER BOAG

mette Valley. He first gained recognition after he was commissioned to paint ten images of the Modoc War for a travelling exhibit in the 1870s, but was best known for his paintings of the Cascade Mountains across Oregon, Washington, and California. Parrott spent several productive years in Klamath Falls, and the mountains that dot our region were popular subjects in his prolific body of work.

Parrott came from an artistic family and mentored, among others, Ashland artist Grace Russell Fountain. Like photogra-

Continued on page 45



PHOTO COURTESY PETER BOAG

ABOVE: *Crater Lake* by William S. Parrott's student and Ashland native, Grace Russell Fountain.

AT TOP: Washington State History Professor Peter Boag pictured here with one of Parrott's paintings depicting Mt. Hood.

PASSION CREATIVITY PERFORMANCE

A photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark tuxedo and white shirt, sitting at a grand piano and playing. He is looking towards the right. The background shows a large window with a grid pattern, letting in bright light.

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Underground History

Continued from page 43

pher Peter Britt, these artists were sharing views that many would never see otherwise. Parrott's obituary stated that Mount Hood was his favorite, but that didn't stop him from painting other picturesque summits such as Mount Shasta, Crater Lake, Mount Rainier, and Mount Saint Helens. These images helped to introduce both a local and an international audience to the wonders of the West. With looming peaks and moody colors, these scenes allowed the viewer to negotiate their place in relation to the 'wild' landscape—creating a new Western identity and much of the associated aesthetic that remains to this day. This includes the presentation of the West as uninhabited landscape. As Boag pointed out, these artists not only used artistic license to present the frontier in their own image, they were also removing the Indigenous population from that frame.

Parrott painted up until he died at age 71 at his home outside of Goldendale, Washington. He left behind a vast collection, some of which hang in museums, galleries, and private collections, and likely others that remain unrecognized and

might catch the eye of a keen yard sale enthusiast. Lucky for us, many of Parrott's mountain muses are within easy reach and worthy of a summer road trip.

Keep an eye out for Boag's future book to learn more about William S. Parrott. In the meantime, you can check out his other work here: <https://history.wsu.edu/faculty/peter-boag/>. My bookshelf has his 1992 *Environment and Experience: Settlement Culture in Nineteenth-Century Oregon*, which has helped me interpret and understand the archaeology of early homesteads in the region and his 2011 *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past*, a fascinating exploration of gender and sexual identity in the early West.



Chelsea Rose is an archaeologist with the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology (SOULA) and co-host of Underground History, a monthly segment that airs during the Jefferson Exchange on JPR's News & Information service.



Parrott's mountain landscapes were commissioned more than any other subject he painted.

PHOTO COURTESY PETER BOAG

POETRY

NANCY NOWAK

Proclaimed

After the fields'
blond heat, a featureless night

a voice, waking to fir green hills, notes
verde, verde, verde, claiming
morning's territory. Alert now, fellow workers
riding the Greyhound north
affirm: *Oregon*.

Hunched forward, facing one another
across the aisle, they form
an island bound by language.

A word or so, *picaflor*, escapes: *Biblia, duda*,
holds still, hummingbird: Bible, doubt
enough so I can tell
assent, courteous dispute

as one man descants
on the miracles of the Virgin

for whom every breathing syllable
is a sign.

Nancy Nowak's poetry has appeared in *Poetry Northwest*, *The MacGuffin*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *The Timberline Review*, and *Rain*, among other journals, as well as the anthologies *The Zeppelin Reader*, *Windblown Sheets: Poems by Mothers and Daughters*, and *Last Call: The Anthology of Beer, Wine, and Spirits Poetry*. A finalist for the 2018 Letheon Prize, she was an associate professor at Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, Oregon, where she taught writing from 1994 to 2016.

From My Office Window

the piebald tabby
Henry, palm-sized

from this distance, pads across
the Warehouse yard, nests
in a cushioned mower-seat

a doe and fawn shelter
in the tangled riverbank

beneath the magnolia
a sinuous Kingsnake
drowses:

harmless:
as though this place is
the last imaginable

until mated bald eagles
seeking a home

for their aerie, test
and abandon a fir crown
that faltered beneath the weight

then vanish
east along the river.

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